

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 1064

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, EG, XF

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST QUESTION

1. EGYPTIAN PERM REP MEGUID CALLED ON ME ON INSTRUCTIONS APRIL 2 AND IN FRANK AND CORDIAL CONVERSATION ASKED OUR SUPPORT FOR SADAT'S DECISION SEEK THREE MONTHS' EXTENSION OF UNEF. HE SAID EGYPT ALSO WANTED EARLY RECONVENING OF GENEVA CONFERENCE AS EARLY AS MAY 15. EGYPT'S PATIENCE WAS WEARING THIN, BUT SADAT HAD DECIDED NOT TO ASK THAT UNEF BE WITHDRAWN APRIL 24. HE FELT THAT IN NEXT FOUR MONTHS (BY JULY 24) IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO FIND OUT WHETHER ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS IN SIGHT. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, MEGUID OUTLINED HIS SCENARIO FOR THE PERIOD AHEAD.

2. MEGUID SAID HE CALLED YESTERDAY ON SYG AND PRESIDENT OF SECURITY COUNCIL (FRANCE) TO ASK THAT NECESSARY MEASURES BE TAKEN FOR EXTENSION OF MANDATE OF UNEF "ON SAME CONDITIONS AS BEFORE" FOR THREE MONTH PERIOD, FROM APRIL 24. HE NOW APPROACHING OTHER SC MEMBERS. EGYPT HAD THOUGHT OF ASKING FOR WITHDRAWAL OF UNEF ON EXPIRATION OF PRESENT MANDATE BUT HAD DECIDED TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL PERIOD TO SEE WHETHER PROGRESS CAN BE MADE IN SEARCH FOR PEACE. EGYPT DID NOT WISH TO FACE WORLD WITH REQUEST THAT WOULD PRODUCE CRISIS, BUT SIX MONTHS' EXTENSION SIMPLY TOO LONG. MEGUID HOPED SC ACTION COULD BE TAKEN EASILY "WITHOUT TOO MANY COMPLICATIONS FROM OUTSIDE."

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3. MEGUID SAID EGYPT HOPED TO HAVE GENEVA CONFERENCE RE-

CONVENED ASAP. HE NOTED THAT IN JUNE AN ARAB SUMMIT IS SCHEDULED AND THAT EGYPT AND OTHER ARABS WILL BE REASSESSING THEIR POSITION AT THAT TIME.

4. I PROBED SEVERAL TIMES FOR INDICATIONS MEGUID MIGHT BE FLEXIBLE ON DURATION OF NEW EXTENSION. I MADE CLEAR WE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED SIX MONTHS. HE WAS ADAMANT, AND WENT SO FAR AS TO INDICATE THAT REAL PUBLIC EFFORT TO GET EGYPT TO AGREE NOW TO LONGER PERIOD WOULD RESULT IN CONFRONTATION.

5. IN ENSUING DISCUSSIONS MEGUID FORESAW MID-APRIL MEETING OF SC AT WHICH SC WOULD PASS "SINGLE EXTENSION UNDER PRESENT GROUND RULES." HE EXPECTED SYG WOULD PREPARE IN ADVANCE HIS USUAL REPORT, WHICH COUNCIL WOULD ACCEPT. HE ASSUMED WALDHEIM'S REPORT WOULD REFER TO EGYPT'S APRIL 1 DEMARCHE SEEKING THREE MONTHS' EXTENSION. THE RESOLUTION COULD BE VERY SIMPLE. WE AGREED IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR SUCH RESOLUTION TO BE INTRODUCED WITHOUT SPONSORS BY SC PRESIDENT, FOLLOWING "IMMACULATE CONCEPTION" FORMULA.

6. MEGUID DID EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE TO ARABS OF REFERENCE TO SC RESOLUTION 338, "WHICH IS BASIS OF EVERYTHING WE HAVE BEEN DOING." HE MENTIONED NO OTHER SC RESOLUTION.

7. AGREEING THAT THIS SCENARIO NOT UNREASONABLE, I ASKED MEGUID WHEN AND HOW HE HAD IN MIND RECONVENE GENEVA CONFERENCE AND WHETHER THERE WOULD BE TIME FOR IT TO MAKE REAL PROGRESS. MEGUID SAID HE HAD READ IN NEW YORK TIMES THAT FAHMI HAD ALREADY ASKED CO-CHAIRMAN THROUGH US AND SOVIET AMBASSADORS IN CAIRO TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS. MEGUID THOUGHT MID-MAY WAS DESIRABLE OPENING DATE BUT SAID HE RECOGNIZED NECESSITY FOR PRIOR SUBSTANTIVE PREPARATIONS TO ENSURE USEFUL MEETING. HE DID NOT EXPECT GENEVA CONFERENCE TO ACHIEVE TOTAL SUCCESS IN FEW WEEKS, BUT FELT THAT BY JULY 24 EVERYONE WOULD KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE AT GENEVA "WHETHER SUCCESS IS POSSIBLE." HE INDICATED THIS WLD DETERMINE WHETHER EGYPT WLD AGREE TO FURTHER EXTENSION OF UNEF.

8. MEGUID SAID THAT NEXT WEEK ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS (HE MENTIONED ONLY EGYPT, SYRIA, JORDAN AND PLO) WOULD MEET TO

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ATTEMPT WORK OUT COMMON POSITION. IN PARTICULAR GROUP WOULD ADDRESS QUESTION OF PLO REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA. MEGUID HAD SUGGESTED THAT ARAB LEAGUE BE UMBRELLA UNDER WHICH PLO REPS WOULD HAVE CHANCE TO GO TO GENEVA AND TALK DIRECTLY WITH ISRAELIS. IF THIS COULD NOT TAKE PLACE IN MAIN CONFERENCE, PERHAPS IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE IN COMMITTEE OR SUB-COMMITTEE. IMPORTANT THING WAS TO GET PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS TALKING TO EACH OTHER. MEGUID SAID IT OUGHT NOT TO BE BEYOND

INGENUITY OF ARAB LAWYERS TO ACHIEVE A BASIS FOR THIS.

9. I ASKED MEGUID WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO UNDOF. HE SAID HE HAD NO NEWS AT ALL. HE HYPOTHESIZED THAT SADAT AND ASSAD HAD DISCUSSED QUESTION AT FAISAL FUNERAL. PROSPECT FOR MOVEMENT AT GENEVA WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY INFLUENCE SYRIAN DECISION TO ALLOW NEW EXTENSION OF UNDOF MANDATE.

10. THROUGHOUT CONVERSATION MEGUID WAS OPEN AND RELAXED. ONLY ONCE DID HE REALLY TALK TOUGH FOR THE RECORD -- IN REITERATING THAT HE WANTED TO AVOID POLEMICS BUT WLD REPLY IN KIND IF ISRAELI REPS ATTACKED EGYPT IN SC DEBATE. HE FORESAW THAT BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH USG WLD BE CONTINUING ON PARALLEL TRACK DURING EXTENSION PERIOD. I ASSURED MEGUID MY FIRM INTENTION TO WORK CLOSELY WITH HIM DURING PERIOD AHEAD. I ALSO COMPLIMENTED SADAT'S RECENT STATEMENT ALONG LINES OF DEPT'S PRESS SPOKESMAN'S COMMENTS.

11. IT STRUCK ME THAT MEGUID DID NOT GIVE IMPRESSION OF SEEING ANY SPECIAL MAGIC IN GENEVA CONF. IN LINE WITH EGYPT'S PUBLIC POSITION, HE TREATED GENEVA AS OBVIOUS PLACE FOR NEXT EFFORT. HE BELIEVED JULY 24 CLD BE DATE FOR DANGEROUS CRISIS IF NO PROGRESS MADE. BUT HE APPEARED TO BE APPEALING INDIRECTLY FOR STRENUOUS USG EFFORTS TO PERSUADE ISRAEL TO CHANGE PRESENT POSITION OUTSIDE GENEVA FRAMEWORK SO THERE WLD NOT BE DEADLOCK AT GENEVA WHEN THREE-MONTH EXTENSION EXPIRES.  
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